

INSPECTION REPORT

LYNNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111590

Head teacher: Mrs J Lowe

Reporting inspector: Miss W L R Hunter
3277

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th June 2002

Inspection number: 250197

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grosvenor Street Hartlepool
Postcode:	TS26 8RL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor C Richardson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3277	Miss W L R Hunter	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
				How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
12536	Mrs S Bullerwell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18819	Mr J Atkinson	Team inspector	Design and technology	
			Information and communication technology (ICT)	
			Physical education	
			Special educational needs	
25507	Mr L Garner	Team inspector	History	
			Geography	
			Music	
			Religious education	
			English as an additional language	
			Equal opportunities	
19797	Mrs J Kearns	Team inspector	English	
			Art and design	
30439	Mr M Heyes	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lynnfield Primary School is situated close to the centre of Hartlepool. The area is very run down and is suffering from extreme disadvantage. Many families are moving out of the area and this is causing pupil numbers to fall, although an increasing number of parents choose to keep sending their children to this school after they have moved. The school is in a New Deal for Communities area and has twice received a Basic Skills Quality Mark for its work.

The nursery accepts children twice a year, in September and January. Seventy-five children currently come to the nursery for either the morning or the afternoon session each day. When they first start, children are working at very low levels, with many having real problems with their speech and language. Children transfer from the nursery into the two reception classes twice a year, depending on their age. This means that some children only have two terms in reception before moving into Year 1. There are 369 pupils in the school with a reasonable balance of boys and girls, although there are a lot more boys than girls in Years 2 and 5. Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals – this is well above the national average. About one-third of the pupils have been identified with special educational needs (including five children in the nursery) and these vary from behavioural and emotional problems to difficulties with speech, language and general development. Again, this is well above average. Five pupils have statements of particular need and receive additional support. About one in ten of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. Bilingual support staff work with these children.

The school roll has fallen since the last inspection allowing pupils to be organised into single age classes for the first time this year. However, mobility among pupils is another factor the school has to handle. A significant number of pupils join the junior classes part-way through each year. For instance, nearly two-thirds of last year's Year 6 class had not started their education at Lynnfield.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Under the excellent leadership and management of the head teacher, the staff are working as a committed team with the shared aim of giving pupils the best deal they can. Standards in English and mathematics are rising, particularly in the infant classes, but this is taking time to feed through so the standards at the end of Year 6 are still lower than they could be. The teaching is very good and this is a key feature of the school's success. The curriculum is also very good and gives pupils a wide range of interesting experiences that allow them to reach high standards in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, art and design, and music. The school is helping pupils make very good progress in their learning but also equips them for life and helps them explore and develop their own characters. It gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teamwork is a key feature of the school under the excellent leadership and management of the head teacher. Self-evaluation is well embedded and the staff regularly check the effectiveness of their work to be sure that they give the best value they can.
- Teaching is very good and this adds very good value to pupils' learning.
- The school strives for excellence. It provides a personal oasis for the children but at the same time challenges them to do well regardless of their starting point or individual difficulties.
- The curriculum gives a rich range of learning experiences that enable children in the nursery and reception classes to make a good start to their learning and promote high achievement for pupils in the infant and junior classes.

- Pupils are given excellent opportunities for their spiritual, moral and social development. Consequently, they develop very good attitudes and relationships.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science by the end of Year 6.
- The attendance of a small, but significant, number of pupils, where their learning is suffering due to their absence from school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in June 1998. The reception and infant classes were targeted with additional support to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and the work being produced by infant pupils now shows that this has worked very well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are being maintained although the school is battling against high levels of mobility among pupils that affect its performance. Assessment systems are now firmly in place and are working well to help staff track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The school has made massive attempts to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality and now has excellent systems to follow up absence and encourage parents to send their children to school. This has improved attendance a lot but it is still an area where some parents are not working well enough with the school. Over the past four years the school has responded very well to changes in the local area. It has made very good improvements against a backdrop of worsening social and economic disadvantage and has continued to provide a very good quality of education for its pupils.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	E	C
mathematics	D	E	E	C
science	C	D	D	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Children have very low levels of language and mathematical skills when they start in the nursery. By the end of their time in the foundation stage (nursery and reception) children have made very good progress but about half of them are still working below the levels expected for their age. The school recognised a problem with a downward trend in its performance for seven year olds several years ago. To tackle this, additional classroom assistants were employed and specific support was put into the reception and infant classes. This has worked very well and is starting to show benefits this year as standards are rising considerably. Last year, the school's test results for seven year olds were well below average when compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals, but the current Year 2 pupils are working at much higher levels in their reading, writing and mathematics – most are now reaching the levels expected for their age.

In the national tests for 11 year olds last year the school's performance was well below the national averages in English and mathematics and was below average in science. However, when compared to similar schools, the results were average in both English and mathematics, while results in science were slightly better. The school is managing to maintain these standards despite having to deal with high levels of mobility among pupils. The high expectations of the staff show in the challenging targets that the school sets itself, and the school has improved its performance at a rate broadly similar to other schools in the past few years.

Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills still need some improvement by the end of Year 6 but they are reaching standards above what is expected for their age in many other subjects, namely information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, physical education, art and design, and music. This is due to the very good curriculum that they follow and the very good teaching they receive in all classes.

The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress against the targets set for them, as do most of the pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils are achieving very well in this school. However, a small proportion of pupils still have poor attendance and miss too much school. As a result, they do not do as well as they should and their learning is suffering.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and are proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There are small pockets of short-lived immature and challenging behaviour in most classes but staff handle this exceptionally well and insist that pupils meet their high expectations.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work and play well together and have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Older pupils are keen to take responsibility, such as house captains and members of the school council.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, a small number of pupils still miss too much school and this is unsatisfactory – their learning is suffering.

Pupils' very positive attitudes are one of the reasons they do so well and become effective learners. The open-plan layout of the school causes many distractions but pupils listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate very well on their work. The number of exclusions was high last year but this was due to a small group of pupils who were excluded on several occasions because they struggled to accept and abide by the school's code of conduct.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is very good. The consistency of this across all age ranges is a key factor in the school's success. All teachers, classroom assistants and support staff work very well as a team and are constantly looking for ways to develop their work, improve pupils' learning and raise standards. The staff cope with very difficult circumstances, such as pupils' high levels of mobility, absence and some challenging behaviour, but they make sure that they give the pupils the best deal they can. Teaching is

very carefully focused on pupils' learning. For instance, teachers use skilful questioning to make sure pupils understand what they are doing, and they use the beginnings and ends of lessons very well to recap and reinforce learning. Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language, or simply typical pupils in the school, all get the attention they deserve to meet their needs. More able pupils are being recognised, and are encouraged to achieve well, but they could be challenged even further, especially now that the pupils have better skills when they leave the infant classes.

English, mathematics and all other subjects are taught very well. As a result, pupils make very good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this shows in the range and quality of experiences the pupils get and contributes to the high standards in many subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school offers a very rich and interesting curriculum that it backs up with a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils are carefully identified and then supported very well. This helps them to achieve very well and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are supported very well by bilingual assistants and specialist staff and this helps them to overcome their language difficulties and make similar progress to their classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. Pupils are taught to value each other as individuals and are encouraged to flourish. The school provides excellent opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school strives to meet pupils' personal needs and this underpins the challenging climate in which pupils are expected to do their best and achieve well. Procedures for assessment and monitoring pupils' learning are very good. Procedures for monitoring attendance and behaviour are excellent.

The school has good links with parents. Some parents actively support the school and encourage their children to succeed but others do little to help their children with homework. A small number of parents are not supporting the school well enough by allowing their children to miss too much time through absence or holidays, which is affecting their learning.

The school is rightly focusing on the need to raise standards in English and mathematics but it has not lost sight of the richness and range of the other subjects and topics that pupils deserve. The depth and quality of the curriculum is a positive feature and helps pupils to get a very broad education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher sets the tone and all staff follow her lead in looking forward and aiming to make the school even better than it is. Team work is a key feature and everyone knows how they are expected to contribute to the school's success and continual development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very supportive and keep a close eye on the school but, at the moment, their planning is limited to the current year.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Self-evaluation is embedded into the school and is working really well. Teaching and learning are monitored very effectively and this leads to a high degree of consistency throughout the school.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school uses every available source of support to benefit the pupils.

The very effective team of teaching and support staff is a strength of the school. The school has ample accommodation and staff minimise any problems caused by the open-plan design. Resources are good and are used very well to support teaching and learning. The excellent leadership and management of the school underpins a total commitment to improvement and to ensuring that pupils are given the best value possible.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Teaching is good, their children are expected to do their best, and they make good progress. • Pupils are taught to be mature, responsible and to behave well. • The school is well managed. • The school is approachable and they feel comfortable to ask questions or make suggestions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents felt that they were not kept well enough informed about the work of the school or their child's progress. • A small number of parents are not happy with the school's arrangements for homework.

Parents have very positive views of the school and are right to do so. Inspectors agree with their positive comments and disagree with the small number of parents who made criticisms. The school provides very good quality information on the work of the school and annual reports to parents are good. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning from nursery right through to Year 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Children have very low levels of language and mathematics when they start in the nursery. The very good teaching in the nursery, followed by very good teaching in the reception classes, helps them to learn quickly and make very good progress. As a result, children achieve well and become confident and effective learners. However, because they start at such a low point, about half of them are still not reaching the levels expected by the time they are ready to move into Year 1. Despite this, they have still done particularly well and have got sufficient basic skills to be able to cope in the infant classes, where teaching is also very good. This means that pupils continue to make very good progress and achieve well. As a result, more pupils are starting to reach the levels expected for their age by the time they are seven.

2 The school recognised a problem with a downward trend in its performance for seven year olds several years ago. To tackle this, additional classroom assistants were employed and specific support was put into the reception and infant classes. This has worked very well and is starting to show benefits this year as standards are rising considerably. For example, last year, the school's test results for seven year olds were well below average when compared to schools with a similar level of free school meals, but the current Year 2 pupils are working at much higher levels in their reading, writing and mathematics. Most are now reaching the levels expected for their age and this is a significant improvement for the school. Pupils are now successfully catching up from their low starting point in the nursery to a stage where they are almost matching what is typical for seven year olds by the end of Year 2.

3 Junior aged pupils are also taught very well and achieve well, but there are other factors that influence the school's performance, especially when its test results are compared against other schools. For instance, 64 per cent of the Year 6 pupils who sat the tests in 2001 had joined the school sometime after the age of seven, and 51 per cent of the current Year 6 are in a similar position. This is affecting the school's performance because, despite the very good teaching they receive once they join the school, these pupils are not getting the benefit of the very good experiences that other pupils have had in the foundation stage and infant classes in this school.

4 In the national tests for 11 year olds last year the school's performance was well below the national averages in English and mathematics, but these results were average when compared to similar schools. Results in science were slightly better. The school is managing to maintain these standards despite having to deal with the high levels of mobility among pupils. This is a positive achievement but pupils' reading and writing skills still need some improvement by the end of Year 6.

5 Pupils with special educational needs, and English as an additional language, receive very good support and they achieve very well. There are very few more able pupils in the school. However, teachers recognise when a child has a particular strength or ability and try to pitch work at a slightly higher level for them, although this is an area where they could focus more carefully to try to raise standards. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills still need some improvement by the end of Year 6. For instance, the school has already identified that pupils could use their writing skills more often in other subjects, such as science, and that they need to concentrate particularly on the use of language, vocabulary and spelling.

6 By the end of Year 6, pupils are reaching standards above what is expected for their age in many other subjects, namely ICT, design and technology, physical education, art and design, and music. This is due to the very good curriculum that they follow, that gives them a wide and interesting range of experiences in these subjects, and the very good teaching in all classes. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history, geography and religious education, but, although satisfactory, their overall standards are limited by their reading and writing skills.

7 Pupils are achieving very well in this school and standards are rising, although this is taking time to feed through for older pupils. However, a small proportion of pupils still have poor attendance and miss too much school. As a result, they do not do as well as they should and their learning is suffering.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and are strengths of the school. They make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make and to the atmosphere and environment for their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

9 Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are very proud of their work. They listen closely to teachers and support staff, who help them to concentrate very well on the tasks they are given. Pupils are very interested and are keen to be involved during lessons. They want to do their best to please their teachers and know that they can succeed if they try hard. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils know this and respond very well. For instance, in a science lesson in Year 4, pupils eagerly searched the school wildlife garden for different habitats and were fascinated by the various creatures they found.

10 Pupils behave very well. Again, teachers have very high expectations and pupils know precisely what is expected of them, from the start of their time in the nursery. Although there is some occasional immature and challenging behaviour, this is dealt with immediately and is supported very well by the 'time out' and 'isolation' rules, which are applied consistently by all staff. Consequently, pupils develop a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and how it affects others. There was a high number of exclusions from the school in the last year, but these involved a very small number of pupils who were excluded on several occasions because they struggled to accept and abide by the school's code of conduct.

11 Pupils behave very well when moving around inside the open-plan school building. They walk quietly through classes and cause as little disturbance as possible to others' lessons. In fact, pupils are so used to this movement around the school that they sit and work without any interruption or distraction despite other pupils walking past their desks. Pupils play happily together in the playground and behave just as well for the lunchtime supervisors and other staff who work with them.

12 Pupils' personal development is very good. This is a direct response to the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral and social development, which starts in the nursery class and continues throughout their time in school. Pupils live and work in a multicultural society, and have very good levels of respect for the feelings and values of others. The introduction of the school council, with representatives from all year groups, has given pupils the opportunity to show how effective their personal development is by taking responsibility for decisions within the school community. For example, they successfully requested having drinking water available in their classes and are now deciding how they can help overcome the problem of dogs fouling the school playing field. Year 6 pupils have greater responsibility and carry out their duties very well, such as house captains and

monitors. They set a very good example to younger pupils, for example by escorting and supervising the seating of children from all classes during whole school assembly.

13 Relationships are very good. They are based on mutual trust and respect. The relationships are supported by a very good system of 'golden rules and golden book', which allow pupils and staff to nominate pupils for their helpful and caring attitudes. Pupils work together very well and develop an understanding of the feelings and views of others. For example, Year 5 pupils had a mature debate about the effects of smoking then acted out short sequences showing their way of saying 'no' if offered a cigarette.

14 Attendance is improving but is still not high enough. It was very low at the time of the last inspection and was still well below the national average last year. However, the school is now part of a project funded by New Deal for Communities and this has helped to introduce excellent procedures in the past year, which have improved attendance quite considerably. Nevertheless, even with these new systems and procedures in place, there are still some patterns of absence that are affecting pupils' learning. Pupils can achieve well at this school but, when they are absent repeatedly or when they are taken out of school for long periods of time, such as family holidays, their learning suffers. There is a small but significant group of pupils that are affected in this way.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15 Teaching is very good and the consistency in the quality of teaching is a key factor in the school's success. All teachers, classroom assistants and support staff work very well as a team and are constantly looking for ways to develop their work, improve pupils' learning and raise standards. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now much more consistent across all classes. This is one of the reasons why the school is now so very effective in its work.

16 The school is organised into teaching teams that span the year groups. For instance, the foundation stage classes (nursery and reception) work with Year 1 teachers as the 'younger' team. The 'middle' team, covering Years 2, 3 and 4 spans the time when pupils sit their first national tests at the age of seven then move into the juniors, while the 'older' team, in Years 5 and 6, focuses on pupils' preparation for further national tests at age 11 and their subsequent transfer to secondary school. This system works very well and is fundamental to the school's key strength where the high quality of teamwork underpins everything it does. It provides teachers, and support staff, with a network of colleagues to support and guide their work, and helps staff to work very well together. Teaching is therefore very good in all age ranges, and this is why pupils make such very good progress in their learning as they systematically build on their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move from one class to the next.

17 The very focused teaching in the 'younger' team helps to bring children up from a low baseline to the point that many of them are starting to work at more typical levels for their age by the time they go into Year 2. This has not always been the case and is a definite improvement since the last inspection that is starting to show in better standards. This has enabled pupils to make very good progress and is being built upon and maintained throughout the junior classes by the very good teaching in the 'middle' and 'older' teams. In the juniors, the staff have to cope with some very difficult circumstances, such as high levels of mobility, absence and some challenging behaviour, but they make sure that they give the pupils the best deal they can.

18 Teaching is very carefully focused on pupils' learning. Teachers use skilful questioning to make sure pupils understand what they are doing, and they use the beginnings and ends of lessons very well to recap and reinforce learning. For example, in a science lesson in Year 5, the teacher used large three-dimensional models, posters and vases of real flowers to prompt pupils to remember their previous work on pollination. Her excellent use of humour (when she pretended to be a bee) encouraged pupils to think hard and explain how the different parts of the flower all have a role to play in the pollination process. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils were delighted to show that they had remembered how to build up an array to multiply two numbers together. They were keen to demonstrate this, either by lining up rows of coloured plastic animals, by using coloured pegs in wooden boards, or by drawing dots to represent their sums.

19 English and mathematics are taught very well, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use the national guidance for literacy and numeracy to support their work. Their

planning is detailed and activities are carefully matched to the different needs of the pupils in each class. As a result, pupils make very good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers have very high expectations. They aim for the best and make their expectations clear to pupils, who respond positively and strive to do well. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher clearly laid out the aims for the lesson and challenged pupils to achieve them. She challenged pupils to use skills to find information quickly, by asking them to read and appraise an unfamiliar text, then give reasons for their choice and debate the value of their views. This was a new experience for many pupils and they found it hard, but rose to the challenge and willingly took part in discussions and listened to the views of their classmates. Similarly, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson the teacher clearly outlined the task so that pupils could work in pairs describing, visualising and drawing different shapes. However, despite teachers' high expectations of what pupils should achieve, the small number of more able pupils are sometimes given tasks that don't provide enough challenge. For example, in some science activities, these pupils still record their work using simple pictures when they could begin to write their ideas and results in their own words.

20 Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this shows in the range and quality of experiences they provide for the pupils and contributes to the high standards in many subjects. For instance, having had a programme of training themselves, teachers now confidently use the relatively new computer suite to teach ICT skills. For example, Year 1 pupils practised their control of the mouse and learnt to recognise different icons on the screen, while Year 6 pupils were shown how to add video clips to an interactive slideshow presentation, adjust the timing of their presentation and add links between slides. In physical education, teachers' very good knowledge helps them to explain and demonstrate clearly, such as showing Year 2 pupils how to link a sequence of balanced movements. The use of professional coaches for specialist skills, such as basketball, adds an extra dimension to pupils' learning and makes an excellent contribution to the high standards in sport.

21 The open-plan design of the school inevitably causes noise to travel from neighbouring classrooms but teachers manage this extremely well. They expect full attention from their pupils and they get it. Potential distractions are minimised and teachers hold pupils' interest and concentration very well during lessons. With the classroom assistants, support staff for special educational needs, and bilingual assistants, there are high numbers of adults working in classes. They all help to keep pupils on track and make sure that lessons progress at a fast pace to hold pupils' interest and attention.

22 Classroom assistants and other support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They are valued as part of each teaching team and provide very effective support to help pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve their best. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson support staff helped pupils to identify homonyms and explain their different meanings. In the nursery and reception classes, classroom assistants often work with small groups of children to help promote their personal and social skills alongside their academic development. They help to make learning fun. For instance, in one lesson where reception children were using mathematical language to describe the position of different objects, they took part in games of 'follow my leader' and 'pin the tail on the donkey' with different classroom assistants. Children thoroughly enjoyed this work and the classroom assistants carefully and sensitively helped them to distinguish their left from their right and begin to use correct vocabulary, such as 'the tail is above his knee'. In the nursery, the team of staff work very closely together and interact constantly with the children to promote their communication, language and personal skills. For instance, during one session, the teacher worked with individual children on the computer retelling the story of Goldilocks in pictures. At the same time, other staff helped children make breakfast for the three bears in the role-play kitchen area, and developed their social and physical skills by getting them to climb and balance on large equipment and crawl through plastic tunnels in the outdoor area.

23 Teaching and learning are very good. The team spirit and shared commitment among the staff helps them to give pupils the best deal they can at the same time as making learning enjoyable and raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This is reinforced by positive praise for the work that pupils achieve, although teachers' marking tends to focus on what pupils have actually done without giving sufficient information about what they need to do next to improve.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

24 The curriculum has developed and improved since the last inspection. The school has kept a very good balance between trying to raise standards in English and mathematics, without losing sight of the breadth and range of other activities and experiences it offers to the pupils.

25 The school provides a very rich and interesting curriculum. This starts in the nursery and reception classes where children get a broad and stimulating range of experiences that encourage them to explore and enjoy learning. The curriculum in infant and junior classes also gives pupils a broad and exciting range of experiences and leads to high standards in many subjects, particularly those where their reading and writing skills do not have a major impact. The emphasis on pupils' personal development, as well as their academic achievement, and the inclusion of all pupils is a particular strength of the school's curriculum. Another strength is the very good range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and links with the community, such as the use of the City Learning Centre at the local secondary school, which support pupils' learning.

26 The curriculum is balanced carefully to meet the needs of all the pupils and to broaden their experiences. Planning is very detailed to ensure that pupils build systematically on their previous learning in each subject area. Children start in the nursery with very limited skills, and so there is an emphasis on the development of their basic skills, such as reading, writing and numeracy, in the curriculum provided throughout the school. The school has successfully used the national guidance for literacy and numeracy to support its curriculum, and this is helping to improve pupils' key skills and raise standards in English and mathematics. This is balanced carefully with other subjects to make sure that pupils are also offered a wide variety of additional experiences. As a result, pupils reach high standards in many subjects, such as ICT, physical education, art and design, design and technology, and music, although there are not as many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as science and history, as there could be.

27 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; so is the provision for pupils with English as an additional language. The school has very clear and well-established procedures for identifying and targeting pupils with general and specific learning needs, and these work well. Teachers set appropriate work to suit the needs and abilities of these pupils, and the school makes sure that they are given any additional help they need to learn effectively. This is having a positive impact by bringing significant numbers of lower attaining pupils up to the levels expected for their ages. Although some pupils are still working at low levels of attainment they achieve well and are making very good progress against their individual learning targets. Bilingual support assistants make a particularly good contribution to children's learning, and this intervention in the early stage of their education in nursery and reception helps children to overcome any language barriers to their future learning and to settle quickly into the school's routines.

28 Pupils have the chance to take part in numerous extra-curricular activities, ranging from sports such as netball, basketball, soccer and athletics, to clubs for art, ICT, gardening and a choir. A homework club offers pupils additional academic support and gives them opportunities to get extra help if they need it, while a breakfast club gives them a positive start to the school day. The curriculum is further enhanced by a number of visitors to the school such as a parent coming in to speak about having a baby, the police coming to speak to pupils about citizenship, and a coach from the 'Teesside Mohawks' coming into school to develop the sport. The Cleveland Theatre Company comes into school regularly, and pupils in Year 6 have gained a lot from being involved in a recent Tees Dance Initiative project. Pupils are also given the chance to take part in a range of educational visits, such as singing to senior citizens at Christmas, a visit to the local soccer club, visits to the local park to

undertake science and art activities, and a trip to Summerhill as part of their work on the Vikings. All these activities add to the richness and breadth of the curriculum and help to support pupils' personal and social development as well as extending their learning.

29 Provision for pupils' health education is very good. The school successfully equips pupils with skills to handle life, such as teaching them about the effects of smoking, providing sex education and raising their awareness of the dangers of drugs. This is taught in a sensitive way and links well with the positive and caring atmosphere in the school. The healthy eating programme at lunchtime is popular and pupils can explain the need to have a balanced diet. This is further enhanced when pupils take part in physical education activities and can see the relationship between exercise and diet in order to have a healthy lifestyle. The school has recently completed a health week as part of their application for the last two parts of the healthy school awards for healthy eating and physical activity. The impact of the on-going promotion of a healthy lifestyle can be seen in the level of fitness that pupils show during their physical education lessons and their standards in this subject.

30 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This lies at the heart of what the school stands for and achieves. It provides a 'personal oasis' for pupils where they grow in confidence and self-esteem and flourish as valued individuals. The care and commitment of staff in providing for pupils' personal development has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

31 Provision for spiritual development is excellent. Assemblies and hymn practices always include time for reflection when pupils think of their own inner values and develop appreciation of the world around them. The effect this has was clearly seen when a child in the reception class, leaving at the end of the day, was heard happily singing 'Thank you Lord for this new day'. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss their own feelings and to develop empathy for others during personal, social and health education lessons. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils discussed how their facial expression and body language changed when emotions such as being sad or happy occurred in their lives, and they were not embarrassed to show and share their own feelings. There is a high focus on the school's agreed set of values that is promoted and supported by the 'golden awards' and 'golden displays'. This creates a positive ethos throughout school where pupils feel valued by their friends and teachers and try hard to support each other. This is also one of the reasons why relationships in the school are so very good.

32 Provision for moral and social development is excellent. Pupils learn right from wrong through discussions during lessons and a planned programme for personal, social and health education. For example, while sharing the story of Goldilocks, the nursery teacher took time to talk with the children about whether it was right that Goldilocks went into the three bears house without knocking and ate their food without asking. Older pupils consider moral issues such as drugs education and the effect of smoking and alcohol and the impact they have on health. The school council, chaired by Year 6 pupils, gives representatives from all year groups the opportunity for high quality debate on issues that affect the school community. The open-plan teaching areas mean that pupils have very close daily contact with others in their pastoral team. The house system supports pupils' social interaction across the age range, for instance by sitting together in house groups during assembly or by earning house points. The curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils excellent opportunities to work together.

33 Provision for cultural development is very good. Opportunities for pupils to explore their own and other cultures are not specifically planned into the curriculum but they are picked up successfully in many subjects such as dance, music, art and design, history, geography and religious education. This helps pupils to understand language, faith and ways of life that are different from their own. Cultural

values are reinforced through displays that celebrate the different faiths of the pupils in school. Pupils' knowledge of language is extended through the multi-language signs around school that reflect the four 'home languages' of the pupils. Parents and visitors, who share the rituals and preparations for celebrations such as Eid and Chinese New Year, support pupils' multi-cultural education. The bilingual assistants support the inclusion of pupils in lessons and share examples of their own culture, such as preparing Asian food for pupils to sample.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 The school takes very good care of all its pupils. Its systems and procedures are backed up by thorough and detailed policies that are monitored regularly. All members of staff have regular training to keep them up-to-date and effective induction arrangements for new staff, including students on work experience, mean that they are also aware of the school's expectations for health and safety. Child protection procedures are clear and are well understood by all staff.

35 Teamwork is a key feature of the way staff work in this school, and this shows in the high quality of care they give the pupils and the very good relationships that they develop with them. The strong personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' personal development very well and this is enhanced by the school's work with the wider community. Activities such as waste recycling, first aid demonstrations, and learning the seaside code in conjunction with the coastguard, all make a positive contribution to the very good standards pupils achieve in their personal development. The school strengthens its links by encouraging members of the local community to use the school playing field out of school hours. However, this has one drawback – dogs regularly gain access to the field and foul the grass, which is a potential health hazard for the pupils.

36 The school has benefited from a New Deal for Communities project and now has excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and has successfully improved attendance over the past 12 months. A full time social inclusion assistant deals with punctuality and attendance on a daily basis. Parents know that she will ring on the first day of absence and appreciate that this also checks on the safe arrival of pupils at school. She has established very good relationships with parents and liaises well with the education welfare officer providing a detailed analysis of absence. This system is working very well. The school has also introduced other ways to motivate pupils to achieve good attendance, such as 'Norbert the dragon' (a stuffed toy) living in the best attending class each week, and certificates and stickers awarded for good attendance and punctuality.

37 There are excellent procedures in place to monitor and support good behaviour. The whole school reward system based on 'a code of conduct' and earning 'golden time' (when pupils can choose the activity they take part in on Friday afternoon), work well. They complement the high expectations that all staff have of pupils and the consistent implementation of the school's behaviour policies and rules, such as 'time out' and 'isolation'. The combination of all these approaches successfully motivates most pupils to attain very high standards of behaviour, attitude and effort. The social inclusion assistant, funded through the New Deal for Communities project, also works with pupils who are at risk of exclusion from school to continue their inclusion where possible.

38 Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and there is a lot of discussion between staff and individual pupils during lessons on how to improve their work. Teachers in Year 6 use written comments very well to give clear feedback on what each pupil has achieved and how they can improve, particularly in English. However, this level of detailed and informative marking is not happening in all classes or subjects yet, and the school has recognised that more careful formal

feedback could help pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning and provide greater challenge for the more able pupils.

39 The school has very good systems for gaining accurate information about what each pupil knows, understands and can do. There are clear and effective assessment arrangements from when children start in the nursery through to when they leave in Year 6. This helps to identify pupils who have special educational needs, or those that just need a little extra help in certain areas, and allows appropriate support to be provided quickly. It is not used quite as well to identify the pupils that could move on faster and who could be challenged to do even better than they already are. However, the information gathered from regular assessments in all year groups is used effectively to support pupils' academic progress and to tailor the curriculum to suit their needs. This is one of the reasons why pupils' learning is generally very good across the school.

40 The school's policy and practice for special educational needs strongly illustrate the school's concern for, and commitment to, the individual needs of pupils. A particular strength, and a significant improvement since the last inspection, is the way that additional staff have been deployed to support targeted groups of pupils through specific literacy and numeracy intervention programmes. For example, classroom assistants were put into the reception and infant classes deliberately to help improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and number have improved and pupils' confidence has increased. This has led to positive attitudes towards learning and ensures that all pupils are fully included in all the learning and social activities of the school. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good and can be linked to the school's careful identification and monitoring of their needs, alongside the very good teaching the pupils receive in all classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Parents have very good views regarding the work of the school and this has been maintained since the last inspection. They say they have a good partnership and feel it works well to support them and their children. They feel actively encouraged to be involved and are given opportunities to work alongside their children and to support fundraising for the pupils' benefit. Most parents say their children enjoy being at school and are complimentary about the teaching, the progress their children make, and the way the school is led and managed. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. A minority of parents have some concern about homework, the links they have with school and the information they receive about how their child is getting on. Inspectors do not agree with these parents as homework and the daily homework clubs are used very well to support pupils' learning. The school has good links with parents and the quality of reports on pupils' progress is good.

42 Parents are kept very well informed. The school prospectus and regular newsletters tell them about events taking place in and out of school, while curriculum information is provided each half term for each year group and printed homework information is given weekly. The governors' annual report to parents is produced in four languages to accommodate all parents, and pupils' annual written reports give a clear picture of what they have achieved in each subject during the year.

43 The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. A small number of parents have trained as classroom assistants and are used very well to support pupils in lessons. The 'Friends of Lynnfield' organise fundraising activities, such as the summer fair, which are very well supported by parents and the community, to provide resources to support teaching and learning. For example, they funded the extension and refurbishment of the library and bought extra equipment for the computer suite.

44 The agreement for the partnership between home and school is renewed for each child annually and both parties take this seriously. There is a genuine partnership between home and school, with many parents actively involved in supporting their children's learning. However, some parents do not give enough support for homework, while a small number of parents are not helping their children to make the best progress they can by allowing them to be absent and miss too much school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45 The head teacher provides excellent leadership and management. She leads by example, sets the tone, and all staff follow her lead in looking forward and aiming to make the school even better than it is. The staff and governors are working as a committed team with the shared aim of giving pupils the best deal they can. This is fundamental to the school's success and this very effective teamwork means that everyone is working in the same way and with the same goals.

46 The head teacher is supported by a well established senior and middle management structure. The organisation of teaching teams, that cross the foundation, infant and junior age ranges is a very positive feature of the school's management, and is working well. This provides staff with very good systems for support and guidance from colleagues and ensures that they have a clear understanding of the requirements of age ranges different to those they actually teach. In this way, the staff all know how their work will build on pupils' previous experiences and how they contribute to pupils' continuous learning.

47 The governing body is very effective and is rightly proud of the school's work and achievements. Governors are very supportive and keep a close eye on the school. They are fully involved in evaluating its performance and make sure that they get the best value they can from the money available to them. The school uses every available source of support to benefit the pupils. For instance, its involvement in New Deal for Communities projects and initiatives are showing positive benefits in terms by improving pupils' attendance and promoting the inclusion of all pupils. Consequently, the school gives very good value for money. At the moment, the governors' planning is limited to the current year but the head teacher and governors are actively working with the local education authority to establish a longer term picture of the school's financial position and to model different spending patterns to give them even better information to inform their future spending decisions.

48 The school evaluates its own work extremely well. This effective self-evaluation is the key to the school's success and to the consistency of the high quality teaching and learning that is taking place. Everyone working in the school knows precisely what they are trying to achieve, how they will measure their success, and what they need to do next to improve even further. Staff are very self-critical and are constantly striving to do better; this flows through into the high expectations they have of the pupils, both academically and personally. Teaching and learning are monitored very effectively and assessments and test results are analysed carefully to decide where action needs to be taken. This is thoroughly documented and is followed up by decisive action. For example, the focused intervention in reception and infant classes has had a positive impact on standards and additional staff have been placed strategically into junior classes where pupils need extra help. As a result of this specific action, standards in the infant classes are rising and this is slowly feeding through and raising the base levels for staff to build on in the junior classes. The excellent leadership and management of the school is therefore promoting very effective teaching and learning and is starting to improve standards, which should start to bring about higher standards in Year 6 in the future.

49 The school has ample accommodation and staff minimise any problems caused by the open-plan design. In fact, they often capitalise on this by using the fact that there are regular interruptions to help develop pupils' attention, concentration and relationships. The school has a good range of educational resources and these are used very well to support teaching and learning. There are sufficient teaching staff and a good number of other adults, including classroom assistants, support staff for pupils with special educational needs, and bilingual assistants. All staff are fully integrated into the day-to-day life of the school and make their own mark and contribution to its success. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is excellent. For instance, the strategic placement of classroom assistants and special educational needs assistants in classrooms ensures that there is a very strong team of teaching and support staff, which impacts very successfully on the learning opportunities provided for pupils.

50 The excellent leadership and management of the school underpins a total commitment to improvement and to ensuring that pupils are given the best value possible. This has been sustained since the last inspection and is the key to the school's continued future development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 The school should now work to:

- A. Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
- challenging the small number of more able pupils to do as well as they can;
 - improving pupils' speaking skills;
 - increasing pupils' vocabulary and improving their spelling, with a particular emphasis on subject specific vocabulary in science;
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their writing skills across the curriculum in junior classes, especially in science and geography;
 - marking pupils' work carefully to help them understand what they do well and what they need to do next to improve and reach higher standards.

(paragraphs 4, 5, 19, 23, 26, 38, 39, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 89, 90, 91, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 112)

- B. Improve the learning of the small groups of pupils with poor records of attendance by:
- continuing to carefully monitor the effects of pupils' repeated absence on their learning;
 - using the monitoring information available in school to make it clear to the parents that their children are not doing as well as they could be;
 - explaining clearly to these parents that their children can achieve well if they go to school regularly.

(paragraphs 7, 14, 44, 90)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	21	35	6	0	0	0
Percentage	7	31	52	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	37.5	369
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	173

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	119

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	34

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	62
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	49

Attendance

Authorised absence (2000 – 2001)

	%
School data	7.6

Unauthorised absence (2000 – 2001)

	%
School data	1.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	24	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	10	15
	Girls	28	26	29
	Total	41	36	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71% (63%)	62% (60%)	76% (70%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	15
	Girls	27	29	29
	Total	40	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69% (58%)	76% (67%)	76% (74%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	27	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	24
	Girls	14	9	18
	Total	29	24	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58% (72%)	48% (57%)	84% (77%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	21	24
	Girls	14	16	18
	Total	29	37	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58% (49%)	74% (62%)	84% (61%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	14
Chinese	2
White	291
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	15	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	343

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	75
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 – 2002
	£
Total income	1,000,469
Total expenditure	1,030,846
Expenditure per pupil	2,478
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,785
Balance carried forward to next year	6,409

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	444
Number of questionnaires returned	136

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	36	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	33	11	2	3
The teaching is good.	62	33	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	36	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	26	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	28	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	51	35	12	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	32	6	2	10

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52 The nursery accepts children twice a year, in September and January, and they attend for either the morning or the afternoon session each day. When they first start, children are working at very low levels, with many having problems with their speech and language. They settle quickly and make very good progress in their basic skills. This is due to the very good teaching and the care and welcome they receive by all adults working in the nursery. Consequently, children get a very good start in the school and are soon keen to learn.

53 Children transfer from the nursery into the two reception classes twice a year, depending on their age. The move into reception is seamless. The children get lots of care and attention from the teachers and classroom assistants, and they quickly settle into positive work habits. Again, teaching is very good in reception and builds extremely well on the experiences that children have had in nursery. As a result, children continue to make very good progress in their learning and achieve well. By the end of their time in reception, about half of them are working at the levels expected for their age although, because they start at such a low point, the other half are still not reaching the levels expected by the time they are ready to move into Year 1.

54 The foundation stage is managed very well and gives children an effective start to their education. The curriculum is very well planned and the activities that children get in reception dovetail perfectly with their previous experiences in nursery, so that children are working at the best level for themselves. This happens because the nursery and reception staff work so well together in the 'younger' planning team, but also because the arrangements for assessing and tracking children's development are strong and effective. Teachers and classroom assistants know the children very well and have a clear understanding of what each child can do, and the areas where they need extra help and support. Regular assessments are carefully recorded so that, at a glance, it is possible to tell how well a child is doing and the targets that have been set for them to achieve. This level of monitoring and analysis of children's work underpins the commitment by all staff to give them the best start they can.

Personal, social and emotional development

55 This is taught very well. Many children lack social skills when they start in the nursery and have had little experience mixing or playing with others. They soon adapt to the lively and interesting environment, and become part of the nursery 'family'. The teacher and classroom assistants all play an important part by working with each individual child on different activities each week. In this way, children quickly get to know a range of adults and begin to develop their confidence. When they transfer into reception, children have lots of space to work in and work with many different adults. Again, this encourages them to work and play confidently and to mix with others. The relationships in the nursery and reception classes are excellent. Children thoroughly enjoy what they do and are keen to please; this motivates them to try hard and they respond very well to praise and encouragement.

56 Nursery children quickly learn the rules and routines of the class. For example, they wear neck tags indicating 'I am having a break' as they sit quietly to drink their juice and eat their snack, and know they have to put eye goggles on before they are allowed use the woodwork table and tools. The children respond very well when the teacher says 'izzy wizzy lets get busy' and scamper around tidying up and putting equipment away. Children learn to be sensible and independent. Free choice activities in both the nursery and reception classes allow them to choose for themselves at certain

times of the day. Some children opt to sit quietly and work on their own, such as looking at books or drawing pictures on the computer, while others join in imaginative play and other practical activities, such as working off their energy by sawing and hammering pieces of wood or by following an inspector around the classroom mimicking every action!

57 Children learn to look after and show concern for themselves. For example, nursery children learn about healthy food and make fruit salad as a healthy snack. They understand why it is important to follow hygiene rules, such as washing their hands after handling animals on a visit to a local farm. Reception children continue this work, for example by dipping their wet hands in glitter then washing them to show that some glitter still sticks, then talking about how the glitter could be ‘germs’. They have a real interest in how their bodies work and keeping them healthy. For instance, children choose to drink water as they need it during the day and know that exercise is another important thing for them to do.

58 There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children’s moral development. For instance, children in the nursery had a clear sense of right and wrong as they listened to the story of Goldilocks and could link this to their own experiences. When talking about taking their ‘snack break’ for milk and biscuits, one child explained “you eat your own only”. Reception children learn about the differences and similarities of their own beliefs and those of some others in the class. In this way, they realise that everyone is different but that there are some common threads, such as having special places of worship, whether it be a church, mosque or gurdwara. This type of activity also encourages very good cultural awareness. For instance, children try some apple dipped in honey like Jewish people do at Rosh Hashanah.

59 By the time children leave the reception class they have developed good personal and social skills. They are confident and effective learners, who know that they are valued and are part of the whole school community. For example, the children could hardly contain their excitement when one reception class won the award for ‘best attendance’ one week, which meant they were able to keep Norbert the Dragon in their classroom all week.

Communication, language and literacy

60 This is taught very well. Children’s skills are very limited when they first start in the nursery but they quickly develop confidence and begin to speak and listen to each other and to adults. They initially struggle with pencil grip but, again, quickly begin to draw recognisable shapes and make marks that resemble letters. They develop an interest in books and stories and begin to recognise that the text tells the story and is linked to the pictures. By the end of their time in nursery, children have caught up well and this is built on extremely well in the reception classes, to the point that almost half of them are working at the levels expected by time they have completed their reception year.

61 Children are introduced to a wide range of books in the nursery. They share ‘big books’ with the teacher and the rest of the class, and sit sensibly on the carpet and follow the story as the teacher reads the words and points to the illustrations. Her very expressive reading brings the stories to life and keeps children enthralled. For instance, when reading about going on a bear hunt, some children playfully hid behind others and covered their eyes in mock fear of the bears finding them. In the reception classes, children extend their experience with books and learn that the ‘author’ is the writer and that the ‘illustrator’ draws the pictures. They clearly enjoy listening to stories and talking about their favourite characters, such as ‘Spot’ the dog. Children learn to read quietly, to themselves, to each other and to adults. In this way, they continue to enjoy books and explore the difference between story books and books that give them information.

62 Children with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs and language problems, get very good support in both the nursery and reception. This helps them to develop their own language skills but also means that they can take a full part in the activities that the rest of the class are enjoying. For example, in the nursery, a bilingual assistant encouraged children to

join in the fun by climbing and crawling on the outdoor equipment, but also used the activity to help the children recognise and identify the names of different colours, such as the ‘yellow tunnel’.

63 Role-play activities play a big part in developing children’s speaking skills, and also encouraging their personal and social development. Nursery children thoroughly enjoyed pretending to make porridge for Goldilocks and the bears and talked constantly with a classroom assistant explaining what they were doing. Many children initially talk in grunts and incoherent speech but soon start to communicate more effectively, such as when one child proclaimed, “I can’t cook the eggs ‘cos they’re still frozen” while stirring plastic eggs in a pot. In the reception classes, children experience a wide range of role-play scenarios, including an office, a café (set up to look like MacDonalds) and a cave. These stimulate their imaginations very well and offer wonderful opportunities for co-operative play in which they develop their language well. ICT is also used very well to support children’s language development. For example, in the nursery where the teacher used graphics screens to retell the story of Goldilocks and children confidently talked about what they were doing as they moved the characters and objects around using the mouse. Reception children confidently use ‘talking books’ on the computer and follow the plot of the stories.

64 Nursery children quickly learn to recognise their own name but few are able to write it or even make recognisable letter shapes in the early days. They are encouraged to make marks and to copy writing that an adult does for them. In the reception classes, children begin to develop their handwriting and learn the importance of shaping and spacing their letters correctly. By the end of their time in reception, some children are able to write simple sentences, with the correct use of fullstops and capital letters, and correctly spell basic words. Others are aware of the initial letters in words but need visual clues from illustrations to help them work out the word. Their writing varies in shape and size but letters are usually recognisable and the right way round.

Mathematical development

65 This is taught very well. Few children recognise numbers or count when they start in the nursery but they quickly develop an interest in numbers and learn well through practical play. By the end of their time in nursery, children have caught up well to the point that they count confidently, know the sequence of numbers up to five and recognise basic colours. This is built on extremely well in the reception classes, and by the end of the reception year almost half the children are working at the levels expected for their age.

66 Counting is part of the daily routine for children in the nursery and reception classes so they begin to appreciate that numbers are part of everyday life. In the nursery, children begin to show an interest in numbers as they sing rhymes, count fruit that goes into their fruit salad, count classroom objects such as plastic teddy bears, and play number games. They begin to recognise differences in size, for instance when filling different containers with sand or water. Role-play and imaginative games help children to develop their language and encourage them to apply their developing awareness of mathematics. For example, when playing the part of the three bears, one child said “there can’t be two daddy bears so one has to be the baby and you are the littler”, thereby recognising the link between the characters in the story and their own relative sizes.

67 Children in the reception classes continue to experience a wide variety of stimulating activities that support their mathematical development very well. For example, they practise reciting numbers, forwards and backwards, and learn to put them into the right sequence, often up to 20 and beyond. They play number games and use their counting skills in fun activities, such as counting the number of times they clap their hands or hop in time to music. ICT is used very well as a stimulus to encourage children to work with numbers and to recognise sequences, patterns and shapes.

68 The practical approach to mathematics helps children to make very good use of language and gain confidence. For example, in a reception lesson, children developed a good sense of position by pinning the tail on a donkey and giving instructions to move around the school yard. At the start of the lesson, their instructions were often vague, such as “go over there” but children quickly discovered that they needed to be much more accurate and that they could actually control how far their classmates moved by giving instructions like “walk forward three steps then stop” and “turn to face the wall”.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69 This is taught very well. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes gives children plenty of experiences that develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Practical work in science, history, geography and technology based activities sparks their curiosity and encourages them to explore for themselves. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception class, children have a good grounding in all these areas and have a particularly keen sense of how to look after themselves and stay healthy. They are working roughly at the levels expected for their age.

70 Nursery children begin to investigate and explore how things move by rolling cars down a ramp, and by looking at models, such as windmills. They learn about different materials by investigating what they feel like, for instance by rubbing the bricks on the wall to see how rough it is and by comparing this to soft fabrics and smooth metals. Children begin to use their different senses and describe how things smell, taste and feel. For example, when making porridge, fruit salad and biscuits. They learn about the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise, and begin to appreciate the dangers of the sun by taking part in a 'sunsafe' day where everyone came into the nursery wearing hats and sunglasses to protect themselves from harmful rays. Children in the reception class continue their practical investigations, for instance by planting seeds and beans to see how they grow and by experimenting to see which material will be the best to keep a sandwich fresh overnight. They begin to record their ideas, using simple pictures to keep track of how their beans grow, and using ICT to draw and label parts of their faces and the senses associated with them.

71 Nursery children begin to realise that they are changing as they grow. For example, a large display of photographs showing them as babies helps children to recognise the changes that are taking place. They talk about families and about significant things that have happened to them, such as their birthdays, their first holiday and the arrival of brothers or sisters. Reception children continue this theme, for example by painting pictures of themselves and their families.

72 Children take part in regular visits that extend their knowledge of the world around them, for instance to a local farm and a library. They also benefit from regular visitors that talk about their work and share their experiences, including police, firemen and other people from the local community. They learn about features in the area where they live and begin to develop a sense of direction, for example by mapping out their journey to get to school. Practical games, such as obstacle courses, help children to learn about directions, which link well with their mathematical work and use of floor robots.

73 Children are given plenty of opportunities to learn about other cultures. They listen to music from different countries and listen to stories with different cultural influences. In this way, they are encouraged to show an interest in the world around them and to carry this on in their imaginary role-play activities.

Physical development

74 This is taught very well. The nursery has a very good outdoor play area with a good range of equipment. This is used every day and gives children plenty of opportunities to develop their physical skills as well as encouraging them to socialise and play together. Specific activities are planned so that nursery staff work with targeted groups of children, encouraging them to climb on frames and slides, balance on wooden blocks, crawl through tunnels, and throw and catch balls. By the time children move into the reception classes, they know that exercise is good for them and are used to having regular opportunities to use their physical skills.

75 Reception children also have regular physical education lessons that involve a good range of activities, including dance, athletics, gymnastics and games. They learn to move confidently and correctly, for example to land with their knees bent after a jump and to run on the balls of their feet. Children are given very good instruction in specific skills, such as using their arms and bending forward as they sprint between two markers.

76 Children are given plenty of opportunities to handle tools and equipment. In both the nursery and reception classes they are encouraged to manipulate dough, cut wood and make models by cutting and sticking materials together. For example, nursery children have made models of the house linked to their story of Goldilocks, using straws to create the outline frame, wool for the windows and bottle tops for the doors. Similarly, reception children have designed and made their own aeroplanes using margarine tubs and straws.

77 The lively and stimulating environments in the nursery and reception classes encourage children to work practically and develop their physical skills. As a result, by the time they leave reception, children have sound physical control of small tools, such as scissors, and are confident to work with a range of materials.

Creative development

78 This is taught very well. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes offers so many practical experiences that children naturally develop their creative skills in many areas of their work. For example, painting and printing activities are often linked to mathematical topics, where nursery children have drawn pictures of ladybirds, as they practised counting the spots, and reception children have made pictures of animals using shapes they have studied.

79 In the nursery, children develop from very simple mark making to the extent where they draw recognisable shapes, such as a body, head, and arms, in paintings. They experiment with colour, for example by creating red and blue patterns by 'taking a marble for a walk' through paint and by 'splashing' paint to create multi-coloured swirls. By the time they move into reception, children have started to pay attention to detail and can produce realistic drawings to represent fruit and vegetables. Reception children continue to develop their artistic skills by looking at work from famous artists and by working in a range of media. For example, they have drawn pastel pictures of flowers, which show good attention to detail, and have made three-dimensional models of sunflowers using ice-cream cartons, straws and cardboard petals. A large display of children's paintings of nursery rhyme characters shows how they have developed good skills to create initial sketches, mix colours and added texture to their work using paint and textiles.

80 Children have plenty of opportunities to create and explore music. Nursery children have access to a range of instruments and are keen to make noise and play together, for instance by shaking castanets, and playing triangles, tambourines and cymbals. Reception children sing tunefully and clap a rhythm well.

81 Children use computers regularly, in both the nursery and reception classes. They often draw colourful pictures with basic graphics packages and make their own simple musical compositions. They are confident with the technology and are keen to explore what it can do for them. This prepares them well for the work they do in the infant classes.

ENGLISH

82 Standards in English match what is expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is due to the careful and focused placement of teaching assistants into infant classes alongside the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Standards are still below the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6 but many of the pupils in the current junior classes have not had the additional support in infants, which means they were working at lower levels when they transferred out of Year 2. Also, a significant number of pupils join and leave the school during their junior years. This mobility affects the continuity of pupils'

learning, as do some repeated absences and extended holidays taken during school time. In addition, the improvements seen at the end of the infant phase, will take further time to impact as these pupils move through the junior classes.

83 Infant pupils make very good progress in reading and do very well to achieve satisfactory standards by the age of seven. The school's policy for teaching reading is clear and reading is taught very well, with careful assessments made on a regular basis. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise a reasonable range of words and can build up unfamiliar words using the individual letter sounds or by breaking the word up into manageable chunks. They recognise clues from the pictures and illustrations that sit alongside the text and can use these to make sensible suggestions and predictions about what could happen next. Most pupils read simple texts with accuracy and understanding, can correct their own mistakes and know how to use a contents page. Junior pupils make good progress in reading and read with improving fluency and accuracy. By the end of Year 6, standards are still below where they should be but pupils have encountered a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including drama, poetry and mystery. This raises their awareness of differences in the layout and style of vocabulary needed when writing for different audiences. Pupils are very enthusiastic about books and are beginning to develop useful skills of skimming the text for essential information.

84 Teachers encourage good speaking and listening. Pupils listen attentively to stories and follow instructions carefully. Teachers and other adults value pupils' contributions, even when an answer may not be the one required, and this helps pupils gain confidence to speak in front of others. For instance, when Year 6 pupils took part in a debate about whether they were for, or against, two children running away from home. This was based on a novel they had been reading and some pupils spoke out clearly and confidently whilst others listened attentively to what they had to say. However, pupils' speaking skills are weaker than their listening skills and are below what is expected for their age. They find it difficult to explain and give reasons for why things happen, or to use precise vocabulary. This shows, not only in English lessons, but also in other subjects such as science where pupils sometimes struggle with technical language and have great difficulty spelling it correctly when they commit it to paper.

85 Standards in writing are still below the levels expected for seven year olds but have improved significantly. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to write in sentences and in different styles, such as notes, reports and stories. Some common words are spelt correctly but pupils' spelling is generally much closer to the way they would pronounce the word rather than the actual correct spelling. Handwriting is legible but not always consistent in size and shape, and pupils are just beginning to use punctuation. Pupils make good progress in writing through the junior classes. This is because they are given good opportunities to extend their writing, such as poetry, journalistic reports and stories, and are given first hand experiences of using real life literature, such as newspapers and brochures, to enhance their language and broaden their writing styles. As a result, pupils' writing is lively and thoughtful, and their vocabulary is developing. A range of punctuation is used and handwriting is joined and fluent. However, despite this good progress, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed as they could be and are below what is expected for 11 year olds. Their spelling is particularly weak and this impacts in other subjects, such as science when technical vocabulary is badly mis-spelt, such as 'pollyen' (pollen) and 'karpul' (carpel). There are not as many opportunities as there could be for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects, again in science, but also in geography and religious education.

86 Teaching is good, sometimes very good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very high expectations of pupils' academic work and behaviour. They use the National Literacy Strategy very well to guide their work and this is supporting the lower and average attaining pupils effectively. However, there are a small number of more able pupils that, despite teachers' aspirations for them, are not being challenged quite as well as they could

be and this impacts on the overall standards and performance of the school. Individual targets are set in pupils' books and pupils know what these are and, therefore, how they are improving but they are not always as confident about how to achieve their targets or take responsibility for their own learning.

87 Key strengths in the teaching are the way that teachers use questions to develop pupils' vocabulary and confidence in speaking and listening, and their extremely positive management of pupils to sustain high levels of interest, concentration and focussed attitudes to their work. For instance, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher's careful and sensitive questioning led all pupils to think about then suggest their own ideas for poetry that fed into a discussion about the structure and simplicity of haiku poems. Classroom assistants and other support staff also make a very good contribution to pupils' learning in this way. For example, in a Year 1 lesson a group of lower attaining pupils were supported very well to find words containing 'ee' letter combinations in a word-search. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson, numerous adults, including bilingual support assistants and students, worked in the classroom to help pupils extract the important information from reports about Florence Nightingale. Teachers plan effectively for these staff to give focused support to specific pupils, and this positive inclusion is promoting very good support for pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.

88 English is led and managed very well. Teaching and learning are monitored very effectively and this, alongside the analysis of test results, leads to effective action being taken to improve standards. This is shown in the fact that the school has twice been awarded a 'basic skills' quality mark for its work.

MATHEMATICS

89 Standards in mathematics match what is expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2 but are still below the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6. Despite this, the school has made good improvement in this subject and standards are rising.

90 Infant pupils are now making very good progress and achieve very well. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is due to a clear strategic decision to put additional staff and resources in infant classrooms, along with specific targeting and tracking of pupils to improve their performance. Junior aged pupils also make very good progress in their learning but the same factors of mobility, some repeated absence and a lower starting base in Year 3, that affect their performance in English have a similar influence and impact on the school's standards and test results for 11 year olds in mathematics.

91 Pupils achieve well in their number work. This is because of good systematic teaching of number facts, rules and procedures. Pupils learn how to set out their work and the quality of presentation in their books is good. By the end of Year 2, most pupils count to, and understand, number values up to 100. They are beginning to gather confidence when adding and taking away two numbers and use their knowledge of number to solve problems. For example, most pupils could find three lots of number to total a 100, such as $26+44+30=100$. Pupils are learning to use different strategies and methods of calculation, such as halving numbers to make them more manageable and breaking down a problem to arrive at the right answer. While the more able pupils need little help in solving their problems, other pupils often need some adult help to decide which strategy to use first, but then have the basic arithmetic skills to be able to tackle the problem themselves. Junior pupils continue to develop their numeracy skills, both through mathematics and through links with other subjects. For example, by the end of Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of how to apply their knowledge of number to activities such as data handling in science. They confidently add, subtract, multiply and divide with numbers including thousands. They work with decimals, fractions and percentages, but

often need support and reassurance about their work, and have reasonably secure knowledge of shape and space. Pupils handle data confidently and can interpret simple graphs, such as explaining events from a boy's temperature rise and fall when he was sick in bed. Pupils learn new procedures, such as rounding up and rounding down, and how to 'partition' their calculations by breaking them into separate sums but they still need a lot of adult support to apply these methods to solve unfamiliar problems.

92 Teaching is good. The school has successfully implemented used the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy to structure and support teachers' planning. This gives a good balance between mental skills and opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their mathematical understanding through direct teaching and practical activities. Teachers make learning fun. For instance, they use a good variety of ploys such as number fans, games and chants to involve pupils in mental skills sessions, such as when Year 1 pupils chanted and clapped numbers up to 100. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know what they are trying to achieve. Classroom assistants and other adult helpers contribute very well to pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson when the high number of extra adults in the class meant that pupils were given very good support to help them spot patterns in multiplication calculations. Similarly, in a Year 5 lesson where pupils worked in groups with different adults to solve shopping problems, pupils benefited from the high level of adult support.

93 A key feature of the teaching in mathematics is the way teachers use questions very effectively to help focus pupils' understanding and concentration. They make it clear to pupils what they are trying to learn at the start of each lesson then recap and check whether this has been achieved at the end. This is effective and means that pupils have a good idea of how they are getting on. However, despite the positive discussion and interaction that takes place during lessons, teachers do not mark pupils' written work as well as they could. Their marking sometimes lacks any real meaning and often doesn't tell the pupils how they could improve.

94 Mathematics is led and managed very well. The head teacher has assumed temporary responsibility for the co-ordination of this subject and has continued the rigorous and effective programme of monitoring teaching and learning that has been in place for a while. Tangible improvements are taking place and these are supported by the effective teamwork and consistent drive by staff to raise standards even further.

SCIENCE

95 Standards in science match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has done well to maintain a broad and balanced science curriculum but pupils are not getting enough encouragement to use their writing skills to record their findings until they are well into the junior classes. This, along with weak spelling of technical vocabulary, has brought standards down slightly since the last inspection, although the school is still performing reasonably well in the national tests for 11 year olds.

96 Infant pupils get a good range of practical experiences and make good progress. For instance, they heat chocolate to see how it changes when it melts then let it cool down to reform a solid. They grow cress seeds and begin to understand that plants need light and water to help them grow, and investigate how 'push' and 'pull' forces affect different objects, such as kites. Pupils also build simple electrical circuits and begin to realise the dangers of electricity, and that some materials conduct it well while others do not. There is a strong emphasis on learning about healthy living and diet that links effectively to the school's priority on healthy living. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, pupils have covered a good range of scientific topics and have sound knowledge and understanding, but they tend to record most of their work using sequences of simple pictures, by filling in short

sections on pre-prepared worksheets or by talking to an adult who then writes for them. This limits their opportunities to start using their own writing skills to present their work.

97 Junior pupils continue to make good progress in science. They develop their investigative skills particularly well through a good range of practical experiments. For instance, pupils in Year 4 have used sieves and magnets to separate mixtures of solids and liquids, and have measured the volumes of gases. Year 5 pupils have taken part in a ‘Challenge Industry’ project that has brought them into contact with the scientific processes used in local industries, such as crushing dolomite, testing stations and packaging systems. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how to carry out fair and reliable tests and have a particularly keen awareness of the health and safety aspects of carrying out experiments. For example, pupils know why it is important to wear eye protectors when working with volatile materials. They record results very well using tables and graphs, and often use ICT to present these effectively. However, although pupils give clear predictions and explanations of their methods, they write limited amounts; this narrows the depth and quality of their work and does not always do justice to their good scientific knowledge and understanding. Another factor that influences the presentation of their work, and their standards, is that spelling skills are weak. Even the oldest pupils regularly mis-spell technical vocabulary, sometimes even when copied from the board.

98 Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers plan their lessons very carefully and clearly identify the key vocabulary and language to be used. They use questions very effectively to encourage pupils to talk about their work and to develop an appropriate scientific vocabulary. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils had planted cress seeds and broad beans, and kept some in the light but put the rest in the dark, many pupils had limited communication skills yet they still managed to explain that their ‘prediction’ was that the plants in the light would grow better. Similarly, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils looked at photographs of a recent visit to the local park and talked about what had made them slow down when they slid down the slide. Careful questioning by the teacher, classroom assistants and other adults in the class helped pupils to realise that there were ‘forces’ at work and that these had affected the rate of their descent. Although a lot of valuable discussion takes place during lessons, pupils often struggle to record their ideas and findings. For instance, the same Year 2 pupils tended to draw picture or write short sentences, such as “I yoosed my feet”. Junior pupils begin to write more as they get older, but they still tend to resort to short sentences, one-word answers or pictures and do not use their writing skills as effectively as they could in many cases. Pupils’ spelling is weak, especially when they attempt technical vocabulary, such as “nute” (newt), “pollyen” (pollen) and “helthy eating means awer bones get helthy”.

99 Teachers make very good use of the school’s outdoor facilities to support science. In particular, the wildlife garden is an excellent resource that provides plenty of opportunities, for example Year 4 pupils used it to good effect to locate and investigate different habitats. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working practically and respond very well to the enthusiasm of their teachers when they introduce them to new ideas. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, where pupils looked at the components of a healthy diet, one of the bilingual assistants brought in samples of the type of food that she eats regularly. The range of smells and colours fascinated the pupils as they looked at samosas, chickpea curry and many more delicacies.

100 Standards in science have improved for younger pupils, and are similar for the juniors, since the last inspection. This is because the subject is led and managed effectively. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored to make sure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in a logical sequence, and they are given a good range of practical experiences to develop their investigative skills. There are good links with other subjects, such as ICT. The school has already identified that pupils

could have more opportunities to use their writing skills to record their own work and there are plans in place to tackle this next year.

ART AND DESIGN

101 Few art and design lessons were seen but there was ample other evidence to judge that standards are above the levels expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection and this is due to improvements that have been made in the curriculum and a clear focus on teaching subject specific skills. Pupils' work is highly valued through the excellent displays in all areas of the school, and this makes a very strong contribution to their spiritual and cultural development.

102 Infant pupils use a range of media, such as paint, coloured pencils and pastels and produce very accurate observational drawings from first-hand experiences. For example, their pastel drawings of fruit and vegetables show an outstanding awareness of shading techniques to give feel and texture to their work. This activity was linked well to pupils' work on healthy eating in their personal, social and health education lessons. By the end of Year 2, pupils record their ideas and feelings confidently. Visits to the local park have been used successfully to develop pupils' sketching skills, and this work has been further developed into collage using leaves, flowers and bark as well as detailed observational drawings. There has been some good work on designing clay tiles, showing imaginative and detailed three-dimensional sculpture.

103 Junior pupils improve their control of tools and techniques, carry out detailed research, and experiment with different materials and images. This allows them to produce a variety of work, which is well finished and pays careful attention to detail. For instance, a display of Year 6 artwork on the urban landscapes of Hartlepool is stunning. Pupils based it on the work of Lowry and used his techniques of painting, as well as light and shadow, depth and distance. Pupils look at artwork from other cultures and festivals, such as Divali, and know about artists such as Van Gogh, Monet and Seurat. Pupils' art and design activities are often linked to other areas of the curriculum and this helps to bring an extra dimension to their work. For example, Year 5 pupils worked with different textiles and fabrics to create a collage to illustrate the story of 'Jason and the Golden Fleece' from their history studies, and Year 6 pupils sketched different facial expressions to suit their moods of the poems they had written.

104 Teaching is very good. Lessons are carefully planned to give pupils a balance of experiences that help develop their skills but also give them time to explore and investigate for themselves. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils were planning a collage linked to their previous visit to a local park. The teacher carefully broke the task down into manageable steps, and made very good use of photographs as a visual aid and stimulus for pupils' ideas. Pupils' clearly enjoy their artwork. Their sketchbooks are well presented and show the pride they take in their achievements.

105 Art and design is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator gives good direction and support to colleagues and teaching and learning have been monitored effectively to check on standards for the oldest pupils. The curriculum is broad and stimulating, and is enhanced even further by an art club, which is popular and contributes well to pupils' social development. For example, pupils making Japanese kites in the after school art club designed and coloured a pattern with detail then discussed how the design of their kite could help it fly. Visits support the art and design curriculum well and the school plans to add an extra dimension to its work through a bid for funding to involve visiting artists next year.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106 Few lessons were seen but there was ample other evidence to judge that standards in design and technology are above the levels expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since the last inspection there has been improvement in the depth of pupils' planning and evaluation, which has sustained the good standards.

107 Infant pupils make simple drawings of the plans for their designs then transfer these into actual models. They work with a variety of materials, such as paper, card, wood, straws and fabric. For example, Year 1 pupils made pictures of nursery rhyme characters with simple moving parts, while Year 2 pupils examined various types of winding mechanisms then designed and made their own crane with a hook to pick up an empty tube of sweets. Pupils know that there are a variety of means of joining materials such as glue, sellotape, stapling and brass paper fasteners. They take care with the finish of their products, pay attention to detail, and effectively evaluate their work in progress and their final products. For instance, Year 2 pupils obviously gave careful thought to the best way of fixing the corners when they designed and made a photograph frame.

108 Junior pupils plan and make products accurately using a variety of tools, including a saw and a hammer and materials such as wood and card. For example, Year 4 pupils made an excellent collection of greetings cards with moving parts and tested their final products by showing them to the younger pupils in the school. Pupils produce clear labelled sketches of their initial ideas, modify them to take account of any problems and conclude with a final design. Pupils know how to evaluate and improve their work and they make informed choices about materials. For example, pupils in Year 5 made their own biscuits using a recipe where they selected the ingredients, paying careful attention to their nutritional value, while Year 6 pupils showed good skills in designing, making and evaluating a pair of slippers.

109 Teaching is very good. Teachers' planning is good and the planned activities encourage pupils to think for themselves, experiment with their designs and modify them in the light of experience. Teachers provide resources and materials that lead pupils to try out their own ideas and this stimulates and sustains their interest, motivation and concentration. Pupils enjoy creative and investigative work and acquire good collaborative skills when working in pairs or groups. Teaching is carefully organised to take account of pupils' different abilities and needs through the very good use of teaching assistants during lessons. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, where pupils were looking at playground equipment and planning how to make their own models, classroom assistants worked very well to engage pupils in discussion about their ideas and to help make critical suggestions about the suitability of their choices.

110 Design and technology is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator's commitment, enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge is having a positive impact on standards. The outcome is that teachers are well supported, the curriculum is effectively monitored and pupils are asked to address real life challenges with an appetite for solutions that are practicable.

GEOGRAPHY

111 Few geography lessons were seen. Although there was not very much written work, there was sufficient evidence from discussions with teachers and pupils and from teachers' planning and records, to judge that standards match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are not as high as the last inspection but pupils still make very good progress and achieve well.

112 Two topics have had a particular impact on pupils' geographical knowledge. Infant pupils have been following the journeys of 'Barnaby Bear' around the world. This has given them a good

insight into where different countries and continents are. Junior pupils have used national newspapers to gain information on other parts of the world in their topic 'What's in the News'. This involves pupils in worthwhile discussions and debates about topical issues but there is little written work recorded to consolidate their findings about local, national or international issues. For instance, in one short session (during the World Cup) Year 3 pupils were able to identify Brazil and Germany on a world map. They could find Kashmir and explain why India and Pakistan are in dispute about this country but, although they made good use of their speaking and listening skills, they did not use their other literacy skills effectively to record any of this information.

113 Teaching is good. Lessons are planned carefully and classroom assistants contribute well, especially when pupils are carrying out visits or research outside their classrooms. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils looked at the way road signs are used to help control traffic and then moved on to find out what kind of traffic uses the major road outside school. The teacher explained clearly what pupils should do and then the teaching assistant effectively worked with the groups who used a tally chart to count the cars, buses and lorries, which used the road.

114 Geography is led and managed effectively. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum is still broad, balanced and gives pupils a range of interesting and worthwhile experiences.

HISTORY

115 No history lessons were seen but there was sufficient evidence to judge that standards match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Although pupils have limited literacy skills, they are interested and write good accounts in their own words that show their sound historical knowledge and understanding.

116 The history curriculum is broad and exciting. It links well with others areas of work and teachers carefully exploit these opportunities to add interest to pupils' learning. For example, Year 2 pupils have made good links with their artwork and have produced very good quality crayon and pastel drawings of the great fire of London, while Year 4 pupils have used the Internet to research and explain how the Vikings travelled so far from their homes. Year 5 pupils used their literacy skills very well to give good accounts of the battle of Marathon from the viewpoint of an Athenian, and Year 6 pupils have effectively written about the way Victorian schools differed from those of today.

117 Teaching is good and pupils clearly enjoy their work. For example, Year 1 pupils have questioned parents and grandparents about the toys they used to play with. One mum identified the 'Space Hopper' as her favourite toy, much to the amusement of the pupils. Similarly, Year 3 pupils have discussed, and identified, what they think Henry VIII would, and would not, have done when he was king of England. They think he would have hunted deer and foxes, but not gone shopping!

118 The school has maintained its standards in history since the last inspection. This is because the subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of what is happening in the school and monitors teaching and learning effectively. She recognises the role that history has to play in supporting pupils' cultural development and has identified the need to expand the range of artefacts to make this aspect of the subject more accessible to the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above the levels expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the last

inspection. This is because assessment has improved considerably and planning now ensures that pupils' skills develop progressively as they get older. The school has made very good progress over the past four years and this is due to the very good range of resources it now has, particularly the computer suite, the development of teachers' expertise with new technologies, and the very strong leadership and management of the subject.

120 Infant pupils make very good progress in their learning. They are able to log on to the school's network, have good keyboard skills and confidently use the computer for word processing. Pupils learn the basic skills of how to move the mouse and choose options on the screen. By the end of Year 2, they are able to communicate their ideas using text and graphics and can enter, store, retrieve and print their work. For example most pupils can use a simple graphics package to draw pictures, in the style of a famous artist, then add text to describe their work. Pupils use their ICT skills to help improve their literacy and numeracy skills. For instance, Year 1 pupils entered and stored information about the different hair colour of the class, represented the results in a bar graph and wrote a summary of their findings.

121 Junior pupils continue to make very good progress and confidently apply their use of ICT to other areas of their work. For example, in Year 3 they investigated data about the different months of the year when different pupils were born. They interrogated this data in a variety of ways and became fully aware of the power of the computer's memory and the benefits of searching large amounts of data electronically. Year 4 pupils made effective use of the Internet to investigate facts about the Vikings for their history topic. Pupils in Year 5 were able to interrogate a spreadsheet about a school's tuck shop and showed very good skills in control technology when, for example, they directed a robot through an imaginary temple. By the end of Year 6, pupils have extended their skills in word processing and are able to store, retrieve and amend data, enter sequences of instructions and use a multi media package to produce a slide-show presentation about a country that they have chosen to study. In their presentations they combined text, graphics and animation with good skill and considerable imagination. They extended this work by adding a link from the Internet to their presentation and by adjusting the timing of the slides.

122 Teaching is very good. ICT is taught as a separate subject and many opportunities are taken to develop pupils' skills through other subjects. Teachers have benefited from a range of training and now have very good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and provide good levels of individual support to ensure that they do so. As a result, pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and they are very enthusiastic to learn. They listen to instructions carefully, treat equipment with absolute respect and are eager to improve their skills. All lessons have very thorough introductions with clear explanations of what pupils are expected to do. Teachers have established effective routines of working and this means that time is used well and pupils are very self-disciplined when working with minimal supervision. A particular strength is the extra support that pupils with special educational needs, and English as an additional language, receive from the support assistants, which leads to them gaining in confidence and making few mistakes in the application of skills.

123 ICT is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator is a driving force in the pursuit of raising standards, with the outcome that pupils are very well prepared for the technological challenges they will face later on in their education. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection and staff and pupils all have a desire for further knowledge and skills.

MUSIC

124 Few music lessons were seen but there was ample other evidence to judge that standards are above the levels expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These high standards are achieved because of the positive way the subject is being led by the co-ordinator and because of the very good teaching that takes place. A link with the secondary school music department for the Year 6 classes also makes a tremendous impact on the standards these pupils achieve.

125 Teaching is very good and lessons are planned to link well to other areas of study. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils composed and performed the background music for a mystery story that they were reading. Using a picture of a castle surrounded by trees, as a stimulus for their composition, pupils chose instruments to help them make the sounds of the wind and a creaking door. They altered the pitch of their voices as they sang and changed the tempo until they were happy that it matched the mysterious and threatening mood of the text. Year 6 pupils benefit from being able to use a computer suite at the 'City Learning Centre' at their local secondary school. This is an excellent learning environment that gives pupils access to equipment way beyond what typical primary school children use. For instance, in one lesson, they were working individually on a music computer program that let them create modern music to a professional standard and were preparing to produce a high quality CD of their own work. These pupils benefit from very good teaching by a specialist teacher from the secondary school with very good support from their class teacher.

126 Standards in music have improved since the last inspection. This is because the subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator recognises that pupils need opportunities to develop their aesthetic and creative work, and places a strong emphasis on making sure the school balances this against the demands of subjects such as English and mathematics. Consequently, the music curriculum is well organised, carefully planned and effectively monitored to give pupils of all ages a rich and interesting range of experiences that promote high standards and contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127 Standards in physical education are above the levels expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils experience a challenging and exciting curriculum through a good range of physical activities. From an early age, they develop a good understanding of the relationship between health and fitness and this fits well with the school's aspiration to be recognised as a national healthy school. As a result, pupils take care with their diet and exercise on a regular basis.

128 Infant pupils are able to travel, climb and balance well on both the floor and apparatus. They perform simple skills with agility and have good control of their movements. For example, Year 2 pupils showed very good co-ordination and body control when working in pairs to put together a sequence of stretches and balances. Pupils develop good skills in performing the basic actions of throwing and catching over short distances and become increasingly accurate with their passes. In dance, pupils are able to represent the mood, pace and style of music very well and can move skilfully with an awareness of others around them. For example, Year 1 pupils have a very good sense of rhythm and movement in country dancing. In athletics, pupils are able to sprint with speed and are

aware of the importance of teamwork in relay races. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good all-round levels of fitness and are very aware of the need to warm-up, cool down, and of the benefits and effects of exercise on their bodies.

129 Junior pupils have good levels of co-ordination and are agile and balanced in their movements. For example Year 4 pupils are able to balance using different parts of their body and then link a sequence of movements that include balancing and jumping. A strength of their work is that pupils are able to make perceptive evaluations of their performances and are keen to refine their ideas in response to suggestions for improvement. All junior pupils have regular swimming lessons and the standard is good. As a result, almost all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres, in a variety of strokes, before they leave the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed very good skills in football, basketball and netball. They benefit from additional support by professional coaches in these activities, and also in dance where, through their involvement with a local dance company, pupils in Year 6 constructed a complex and high quality synchronised dance sequence. Outdoor and adventurous activities are well catered for through the school's successful residential experiences for all pupils in Year 6. Physical education and sport have a high profile in the school and, consequently, pupils continue to develop very good team building and problem solving skills and maintain a high level of enthusiasm for all physical activities as they grow older.

130 Teaching is good and often very good, especially for older pupils. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and demonstrate skills effectively. They have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement, set challenging tasks and use praise and encouragement well to motivate pupils. This leads to pupils' enthusiastic responses, good concentration and excellent attitudes to their work. For example, Year 2 pupils were disciplined and focused when preparing a sequence of movements – they wanted to do well. All teachers prepare their lessons well, have good relationships with pupils and make very good use of the support staff. Consequently, pupils' relationships are also very good and they co-operate well in pairs, groups or teams and are sensitive when evaluating each other's performances.

131 Standards in physical education have remained high since the last inspection. This is because the curriculum co-ordinator is providing very good leadership and management and there are very effective procedures for supporting teachers and monitoring the curriculum. Her commitment to ensuring that pupils receive an extensive range of physical activities and opportunities successfully promotes high standards and supports pupils' personal development. As a result, physical education makes a very effective contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils by promoting the importance of teamwork and fair play, and different forms of dance support their cultural development well. The very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities is appreciated by the pupils and is a positive feature of the rich and balanced curriculum they receive.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132 Standards in religious education match what is expected for seven and 11 year olds by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress from a low starting point and this is due mainly to the high quality of teaching they receive. However, another strength is the way lessons in pupils' personal, social and health education dovetail with the religious education curriculum to complement and enrich their knowledge and understanding in this subject. School assemblies also make a good contribution to pupils' religious experiences. In all of these pupils are encouraged to reflect on what other people have done and also what they can do 'today' to help others.

133 Infant pupils look at many aspects of the Christian faith. For example, following visits into the local area, they can identify the special features of a Christian Church. They also begin to investigate and explore different religions. For instance by listening to stories from Muslim folklore and legends, Year 2 pupils could link the story of 'Two Brothers' to some of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. In junior classes, as well as continuing their study of Christianity, pupils also learn effectively

about Hinduism and Judaism. For example, Year 3 pupils know that a shrine is a 'holy place' and that Hindus believe the water from the river Ganges washes away sin, while Year 6 pupils know about the significance of the Qu'ran. By the end of Year 6 pupils can identify not only the differences but also the important similarities between the major religions of the world.

134 Teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully and use resources and artefacts very well to bring the subject to life. For instance in a lesson in Year 3, the teacher used models of Hindu Gods to stimulate pupils' interest and recap their previous learning before moving on to talk about how gifts are given to the Gods. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils allow pupils to relax and confidently talk about their own thoughts and feelings, without any embarrassment. For example, in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were thinking about 'prayer' and why it is important, they willingly offered their own ideas and suggestions, such as 'talking to God', 'asking for forgiveness' or 'saying thank you'. The teacher used two lines of the school prayer, '. . . as many hands build a house, so many hearts make a school . . .', very well to link prayer to the everyday life of the school and bring relevance to the pupils. The strong and effective link with pupils' personal development was particularly obvious in a lesson for a Year 6 class, which looked at the religious and other meanings of 'love'. The teacher used questions and illustrations very well to help pupils learn that love is not just kissing, 'going out together' or even marriage, but is also being patient, kind and helpful.

135 Standards in religious education are not quite as high as the last inspection but there have been changes in the curriculum since then and pupils still make very good progress and achieve well. This is because the subject is being led and managed very well. The co-ordinator is very committed to the development of the subject and carefully monitors the planning and teaching in religious education. She has been active in linking the Hartlepool religious education syllabus to nationally produced schemes to make sure that pupils are given a broad and interesting curriculum, and has developed good links with the local secondary school to borrow religious artefacts. The school has recognised that the next stage is to put in place a more formal system to assess what pupils know and understand in this subject, and plans are in place to do this during the next school year.